

THE
F A R C E
OF
CHIT CHAT,
OR
PENANCE FOR POLYGAMY.
IN ONE ACT.
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL,
SMOKE-ALLEY.

M,DCC,XCII.

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Sir Oliver Languish.
Singleton.

W O M E N.

Lady Languish.
Mrs Languish.
Lucy.



CHIT CHAT,

OR

PENANCE FOR POLYGAMY.

SCENE.—I.

Enter SIR OLIVER LANGUISH meeting SINGLETON.

Singleton.

SIR Oliver, good morning. I'm come to pay a debt of friendship but whether to condole or congratulate "is the question." You see I'm a modern friend, prepared for either, give me the * * "cue of passion" for a sigh will cost me no more than a smile.

Sir O. Smile, smile you rogue. Cou'd you not take the cue from my countenance.

Single. Were I to do that, I should cry, you look so merry.

Sir O. I suppose then, you are envious of my happiness.

Single. Not I truly. But if your countenance differs not from mankind in general, I shou'd suppose you very miserable.

Sir O. Why so?

Single. By reason, 'tis the fashion for the countenance, to feign what the heart does not feel. But are you really happy?

Sir O. As happy as love and beauty, can make me.

Single. Your first wife, was a careful woman, you'll miss her.

Sir O. Not I indeed.

Single. I am just arrived, so that I know not how long she may have been dead, though sometime, I should suppose, since you are so well reconciled and out of mourning.

Sir O. Dead? no such good luck Singleton.

Single. 'Tis an ungrateful task to be interested in the situation of a friend whose affairs seem to be of so delicate a nature and yet you know, 'tis true friendship urges enquiry. What were the circumstances of the dissolving your—you understand—I spare the feelings of a friend—I would no more renew the blush of dishonour, on the cheek of friendship, than I would raise the blush of virtue on the cheek of innocence—I wou'd preserve the one and partake of the other—therefore tell me the circumstances; I am anxious to know the cause of——

Sir O. The cause of my second marriage, I presume—to tell you truly there were two causes.—Love on my part and beauty on hers'.

Single. I am glad to find you are so enwrapt, with the idea of your new and youthful possessions, as to forget the disgrace which must have attended the forfeiture of your old——

Sir O. Forfeiture of my old, what new tenets are these? I find no such in Thelyphthora. By that code

of

of matrimonial laws I have free right and title to retain the old as well as the new possessions. But in respect to the *old* 'tis a matter I shall never dispute, if any person can prove he has a right to the remainder of my lease.

Single. You are dreaming of leases, while I am talking of ladies.

Sir O. You're mistaken Singleton, I can neither dream.

nor think of any thing but my wives.

Single. You are surely craz'd, Sir Oliver.

Sir O. if I be craz'd you will not wonder when you have seen the beautiful cup which tempted me to take the intoxicating draught. But Singleton are *you* married yet?

Single. Married!—no, I cou'd never love tyranny so well as to wear the chains, for the pleasure merely of shackling another. *besides when both parties are tired of rattling them, they can never be unfastened but by the key of dishonour.* Matrimony is only the back string of Cupid to prevent his falling before he can walk alone. But when he can go of himself he should be left at liberty to range where he pleases.

Sir O. You disgrace the holy state which is productive of so great honours.

Single. Yes but they are *branching* honours—in-
stead of enobling they degrade us—you shall never per-
swade me to chace the deer of cupid within the pale
of matrimony, while I can pursue them on the com-

mon of nature—besides, confined game is seldom the property of the owner—but for freedom's sake often strays into the net of the poacher—the net of my heart is never open to receive such as escape the pale, but those whom affection leads into my toils—the first I shou'd take to my arms, but the latter I shou'd press to my bosom.

Sir O. But Singleton, are you such a fair sportsman in the chase of beauty as might be trusted to pursue a fray deer. Wou'd you return her unhurt?

Single. I wou'd; and wou'd likewise whip him who dare transgress such rules of honour, as constitute the real sportsman——

Sir O. It wou'd be curious and interesting to hear those rules—I doubt they are as little known as practis'd in the chase of love; can you recollect them?

Single. Yes.—the first is—take care you break not the fence of your neighbour—the second, lay no snare in the field of another, lest you be deem'd a poacher—the third, shou'd you find a wanton deer o'erleaping the pale of hymen, check instantly her course but mind you tell no tales.

Sir O. Break no fence, lay no snare—tell no tales—why you are an honest fellow than I thought you—and though you won't let Hymen kindle his torch for you—if you'll attend the chit chat of a matrimonial breakfast you will judge how far he has lighted me on the road to happiness.

SONG

SCENE

Enter

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PENANCE FOR POLYGAMY.

1

S O N G.

Oh the pleasures of my life,
 Since I've wed another spouse,
 To please me will be all their strife;
 To please me will be all their strife:
 Enjoyment reigns throughout my house.
 Oh the chit chat there will be,
 Oh the chit chat there will be,
 The chit chat there will be,
 With many wives when they agree.

Death I'll never mind a straw,
 If he should either spoufy chuse,
 As plenty may be had by law,
 I'll not so small a gift refuse.

Oh the chit chat, &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A breakfasting Parlour—discovers a table prepared for breakfast.*

Enter LADY LANGUISH followed by MRS LANGUISH,
(The former an old Dowager, the latter a hand-
some young Lady.)

Lady L. Lucy tell your master breakfast waits for him.

Mrs L. Stay Lucy I'll call him myself. (*going.*)

Lady L. Pray madam give me leave to command my own servants. I say, go Lucy.

Mrs L. I say, stay Lucy. If you command your own servants you have no right to command me madam—'tis the duty of every good wife, to wait upon her husband.

Lady.

Lady L. If 'tis so, I'll call himself. (*going.*)

Mrs L. Indeed you shall not with me madam. (*returns.*)

Lady L. Then I'll go without you, madam. (*going.*)

Mrs L. Stay, madam, rather than you should have trouble, let Lucy go.

Lady L. 'Tis pity madam, but you had suffered her to go at first, rather than to have given yourself and me so much trouble—go Lucy. [*Exit Lucy.* it if be thus you are to contradict me in the management of my household.——

Mrs L. Your household indeed! am I not as much the wife of Sir Oliver as yourself madam? and have I not therefore as much right to direct all his affairs as you have.

Lady L. No, madam you have not—whose money made Mr Languish what he is—but mine—you wou'd never have had the honour to marry a knight, had not my fortune been the means of creating him Sir Oliver.—You have the assurance to *madam* me when you shou'd have more respect for my title when you speak to me you shou'd consider 'tis Lady Languish you are before.

Mrs L. Although your money might have procured you the title—my charms have acquired an equal share of it's honours—I pray you therefore to remember, that I am as much *Lady Languish* as yourself madam.

Lady L. No, *Madam*. You may possibly claim an equal right to the *person* of Languish, but not to the
title

title—precedence and possession must have in these cases the preference, Mrs Languish.

‡ *Mrs L.* I shall dispute this point with you *Madam*, before Sir Oliver—here he comes.

Enter SIR OLIVER and SINGLETON.

Mrs L. Pray Sir Oliver, have I not an equal right to the title of Lady Languish, with this Lady?

Sir O. That's a question, my dear, the doctor has not yet resolved, I'll ask him the question through one of the newspapers, mean time give me leave to introduce Mr Singleton to your acquaintance. (Singleton starts and appears surpriz'd) What's your thoughts Singleton? are you struck with her charms.

Single. No, but I am struck at her condescension and your command of temper.

Sir O. Why to be sure, 'tis a trying situation, although it be agreeable to Thelyphthora.

Single. (*approaches and salutes Mrs Languish*) *Madam Thelyphthora*, I am happy to have the honour of thus congratulating you on your nuptials—the politeness of the name becomes the charms of the owner.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir O. Thelyphthora! (*laughs*) why you dunce, Thelyphthora is a book.

Single. A book! she's very handsomely bound. Sir Oliver, though you have lost your own senses, you shall not persuade me that I have lost mine. To carry on the joke—what subject does she treat of? If I might

might guess from the title page, it can be nothing but love.

Sir O. You simpleton! I tell you again Thelyphthora is a book in favour of Plurality of Wives, written by one Doctor—Doctor.

Single. He must be a mad doctor who could write such doctrine. I beg your pardon, I now understand you.

Sir O. Understand me! Come let us sit down to breakfast. (*they sit.*)

Lady L. I cannot bear Sir Oliver to see you sit down to breakfast in your morning gown, it appears so disrespectful, besides it by no means becomes you. Bring your master his coat, Lucy.

Mrs L. I beg Sir Oliver you will not alter your dress, there's not the least occasion to change what becomes you so well, and is so proper to breakfast in.

Lady L. Why don't you go Lucy.

Lucy. I'm going my Lady. [*Exit Lucy.*]

Lady L. You will disoblige me mightily, Sir Oliver, if you do not change your dress. Mrs Languish would think a shroud as becoming a thing as you could possibly wear.

Sir O. I am much obliged to her.

Mrs L. And you madam, cou'd fancy Sir Oliver wou'd become a glass case, provided he was embalm'd first.

Sir O. This is only a proof of their affection. (*to Singleton.*)

Single.

PENANCE FOR POLYGAMY.

11

Single. If I thought it was not enough to convince you, I would recommend you to hang yourself, and a further trial——

Enter Lucy with a coat.

Lucy. There's the coat my Lady.

Lady L. Help your master to put it on Lucy.

Sir O. Give it me. (*rises and pulls off his gown.*)

Mrs L. 'Tis very well Sir Oliver, this is a proof of your willingness to oblige me.

Sir O. (*puts the coat half on*) My dearest I would disoblige the world to please my charmer.

Lady L. You wou'd Sir Oliver! ungrateful wretch! you forget the obligations due to me for riches, honour, and above all my eternal love and tendernefs.

Sir O. What must I do, Singleton.

Single. Wou'd you oblige both the ladies.

Sir O. Was it possible I wou'd.

Single. Then wear neither coat nor gown.

Sir O. Well said Singleton. Now ladies I hope you are both satisfied of my desire to please you? (*throws the coat away.*)

Mrs L. Now madam are you satisfied, Sir Oliver is content to run the risque of catching his death, rather than displease your Ladyship.

Lady L. You mistake, Mrs Languish; 'tis rather than displease your honourable personage, that he risques his life. Fie upon you.

Mrs L. Fie upon you Madam.

Sir

Sir O. Are you not yet content my dears? what wou'd your consciences expect? If you mean to have my company to breakfast, you will immediately drop the dispute.

Lady L. I am content. For she can't triumph. (*aside*)

Mrs L. So am I, Sir Oliver. Since she has not got the better. (*aside*)

Single. Are you not cold Sir Oliver.

Sir O. O fie, Singleton; where's your gallantry? who can be cold that fits like me, near two such beautiful funs.

Both Ladies. Gallant Sir Oliver!

Single. 'Twill be fortunate if you don't find your happiness warped between them. (*aside*.)

Lady L. Wou'd you chuse tea or coffee, Sir Oliver.

Mrs L. Tea to be sure madam, who wou'd drink coffee to breakfast.

Lady L. Sir Oliver, madam, is always used to drink it for breakfast. Tea affects his nerves.

Mrs L. That's entirely owing to your carelessness, begging your pardon, madam, by giving it him too strong and too warm, otherwise it wou'd not; take this cup to oblige me, and to make a trial of its stomachic quality—'tis neither too hot nor too cold, Sir Oliver.

Sir O. Your care and tenderness, my dear, demand my acquiescence. (*takes tea*.)

Lady L. Sir Oliver, do you mean to poison yourself? if you have lost all desire to oblige me, give me leave

leave to perform my duty you know nothing agrees with you so well as coffee—here Sir Oliver the cup you are so partial to.

Sir O. Not to abuse both your tendernefs, I'll drink a cup of each.

Mrs L. If you take a drop of coffee—I fhall confider it an ungrateful denial of my tender request—what intereft can I have in defiring you take tea in preference to coffee, but my regard for my dear Sir Oliver's health?

Sir O. (*puts down the coffee*) That's true my deareft, I cannot abuse fuch tendernefs.

Lady L. Sir Oliver, you're a bafe man—to treat a perverfance of attention to your welfare with fuch a cruel denial. (*cries.*)

Sir O. Zounds, woman! you'll neither let me have tea nor coffee, muft I go without my breakfast as well as almoft naked—was ever man fo tormented between thofe who fhould endeavour to make him happy.

Both. I am fure I am doing my utmoft, Sir Oliver.

Sir O. Yes, firft to ftarve me to death with cold and then with hunger—what fhall I do now to pleafe them, Singleton.

Single. I really can't advife, unlefs you go without your breakfast.

Sir O. No, I wont do that neither, I have it—my dears as you will not fuffer me to have tea or coffee, may I have a little milk and water.

B

Lady

Lady L. I don't care what you have, provided you drink no tea.

Mrs L. Nor I neither, so that you drink no coffee.

Sir O. That's kind my dears, very kind Singleton, is it not? see what it is to have *two* careful wives, how the one serves to rectify the mistakes of the other.

Single. Your situation, Sir Oliver, is truly enviable.

Sir O. Oh this is but a small part of the happiness I expect. Lucy bring me a basin of milk and water.

[Exit Lucy.

Lady L. Bless me, Sir Oliver, I had not the least suspicion of your being in your slippers. I thought I had entirely persuaded you to leave them in your chamber every morning.

Sir O. You had my lady, but this lady here prevailed upon me to wear them—it being the first request I cou'd not refuse it.

Lady L. I see, Sir Oliver, the pride I have always taken in your person, manners and dress must be no more—this lady's dominion begins with the destruction of mine.

Sir O. What shall I say, Singleton.

Single. You'll be for ever miserable unless you convince her of the contrary.

Enter LUCY with a basin.

Sir O. Lucy bring me my shoes.

Lucy. Immediately, Sir.

[Exit Lucy.

Mrs L. You are determined Sir Oliver to thwart me in every thing, there's not one poor request that
you

you have granted me since I became your wife. I see all your fondness was pretence, Lady Languish has possession of every reality, while I am mock'd only with its semblance.

Sir O. See there, Singleton, 'tis impossible to please them both.

Enter LUCY with shoes.

Single. Indeed I don't know what you'll do now, Sir Oliver.

Sir O. Eh, a good thought strikes me. (*takes the shoes*) My dears you shall see my desire to please you both. (*puts on the shoes*) I have obliged you my lady. (*puts down the heels*) To please you madam I have made them slippers. I am sure now you must both be pleased.

Lady L. Do you mean, Sir Oliver, not only to disoblige me but to deride me also. To insult me with such mockery—you deserve—but you're the basest of men to use me in this manner. (*cries.*)

Sir O. I can't bear her tears, give me my buckles.

Mrs L. Her tears are sufficient to make me miserable.

Sir O. Was ever man so situated? why there then, damn the shoes, and damn the slippers. (*throws them away*) After stripping myself almost naked, I have now neither coat nor gown, shoes nor slippers—if I stay longer they'll strip me to my skin. 'Tis a proper penance for me to suppose I cou'd please two wives, when I have been these twenty years striving to please one.

B 2

Both.

Both. I'll not leave you until you have complied with my request.

Mrs L. I am determined your ladyship shan't be mistress.
[*Exeunt.*

Manent Singleton.

The folly of Polygamy I think Sir Oliver has sufficiently experienced, although the weakness of the Doctrine is below comment, yet its wickedness deserves our severest reprehension, for it wou'd overturn a system of policy founded on nature, reason and religion, a system which is the cement of social happiness. After laughing at such folly who can help being serious at finding the blunders of the weak, and the designs of the vile levelled at the interest of our species.

F I N I S.

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